



Red Cliff
COUNSELING & WELLNESS

PARENT/ADOLESCENT INFORMED CONSENT:

Privacy of Information Shared in Counseling/Therapy: Your Rights and My Policies

What to expect:

The purpose of meeting with a counselor or therapist is to get help with problems in your life that are bothering you or keeping you from being successful in important areas of your life. You may be here because you wanted to talk to a counselor or therapist about these problems. Or, you may be here because your parent, guardian, doctor or teacher had concerns about you. When we meet, we will discuss these problems. It is important that you feel comfortable talking to me about the issues that are bothering you. Sometimes these issues will include things you don't want your parents or guardians to know about. For most people, knowing that what they say will be kept private helps them feel more comfortable and have more trust in their counselor or therapist. Privacy, also called confidentiality, is an important and necessary part of good counseling.

As a general rule, I will keep the information you share with me in our sessions confidential, unless I have your written consent to disclose certain information. There are, however, important exceptions to this rule that are important for you to understand before you share personal information with me in a therapy session. In some situations, I am required by law or by the guidelines of my profession to disclose information whether or not I have your permission. I have listed some of these situations below.

Confidentiality cannot be maintained when:

- You tell me you plan to cause serious harm or death to yourself, and I believe you have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future. I must take steps to inform a parent or guardian of what you have told me and how serious I believe this threat to be. I must make sure that you are protected from harming yourself.
- You tell me you plan to cause serious harm or death to someone else who can be identified, and I believe you have the intent and ability to carry out this threat in the very near future. In this situation, I must inform your parent or guardian, and I must inform the person whom you intend to harm.
- You are doing things that could cause serious harm to you or someone else, even if you do not intend to harm yourself or another person. In these situations, I will need to use my professional judgment to decide whether a parent or guardian should be informed.
- You tell me you are being abused-physically, sexually or emotionally – or that you have been abused in the past. In this situation, I am required by law to report abuse to the Utah Department of Social Services.
- You are involved in a court case and a request is made for information about your therapy. If this happens, I will do all I can within the law to protect your confidentiality, and if I am required to disclose information to the court, I will inform you that this is happening.

Communicating with your parent(s) or guardian(s):

Except for situations such as those mentioned above, I will not tell your parent or guardian of specific things you share with me in our private therapy sessions. This includes activities and behavior that your parent/guardian would not approve of – or would be upset by – but that do not put you at risk of serious and immediate harm. However, if your risk-taking behavior becomes more serious, then I will need to use my professional judgment to decide whether you are in serious and immediate danger of being harmed. If I feel you are in such danger, I will communicate this information to your parent or guardian.

Example: If you tell me that you have tried alcohol at a few parties, I would keep this information confidential. If you tell me that you are drinking and driving or that you are a passenger with a driver who is drunk, or if you tell me or I believe you are addicted to drugs or alcohol, I would not keep this information confidential.

Even if I have agreed to keep information confidential – to not tell your parent or guardian - I may believe that it is important for them to know what is going on in your life. In these situations, I will encourage you to tell your parent/guardian and will help you find the best way to tell them. Also, when meeting with your parents, I may sometimes describe problems in general terms, without using specifics, in order to help them know how to be more helpful to you.

Communicating with other adults:

Sometimes I may request your permission to speak with someone at your school or with your doctor to find out how things are going for you or discuss ideas for additional care or treatment. If I feel the need to do so or receive a request from your school or doctor, I will discuss this with you and get written permission from you and your parent/guardian in advance.

Minor's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/guardian Signature _____ Date _____

***This document is drafted from The Center for Ethical Practice.